



BLUE HORIZON

Program Report from Friends of Blue Hill Bay

ISSUE 3

FALL, 2006

Inside this Issue

This page - Letter from the President

This page - Recovery Monitoring Project

Pg 2 - Financial Summary

Pg 2 - Bay Management Update

Pg 2 - Our Mission and Board of Directors

Pg 3 - Use Inventory Project

Back Page - "On the Horizon"

Letter from the President

Looking out over Blue Hill Bay from the top of Blue Hill on a clear summer afternoon is nothing short of spectacular. The water, Long Island and the mountains of Mt. Desert in the distance are truly inspirational. It is a resource we have all worked very hard to protect over the past several years and an effort we should be proud of. With the removal, last year, of the salmon farm east of Hardwood Island we were able to breathe a short sigh of relief. How-



ever Blue Hill Bay still needs a strong advocate and our work continues only because of your financial support.

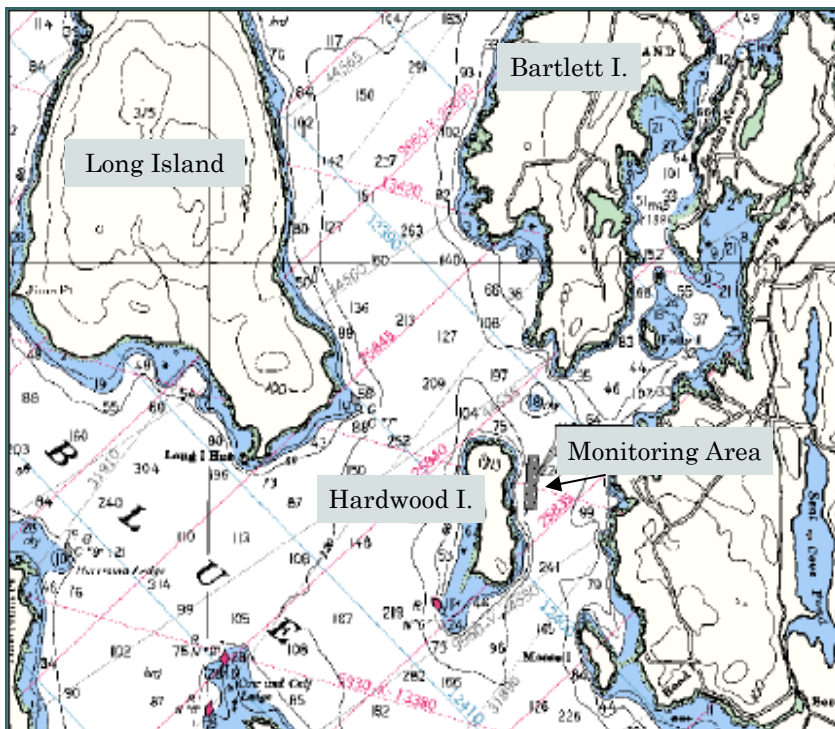
We have several projects

underway this year. One is our monitoring of the benthic recovery under the old salmon farm. Initial results are hopeful in that the worst of the impacts (Beggiatoa matting) seems to be improving. However the species diversity and density on the bottom are proving slow to recover.

Once the results of our study are complete we will publish the data and it will add to a better understanding of just how devastating salmon aquaculture is to our ocean resource.

cont. on page 2

Monitoring Salmon Farm Recovery at Hardwood I.



Friends of Blue Hill Bay has been concerned about salmon farming projects in the Bay for a number of years. Last spring we were pleased to report that there are no more fish farms in Blue Hill Bay. The former salmon farm at Hardwood Island is of unique scientific importance among salmon aquaculture sites on the coast of Maine and New Brunswick. The site was located in as much as two-hundred feet of water, making it one of the deepest fish pen sites on the Northeast coast.

Friends of Blue Hill Bay is committed to understanding the process and the length of time necessary for recovery of the benthic (bottom) community beneath the former Hardwood Island fish pens.

We have hired Chris Heinig of MER Assessment Corporation in Brunswick to conduct a series of sampling and data analyses to research the recovery process. Heinig is familiar with the site and is curious about recovery at these depths.

cont. on page 3

Letter from the President cont.

On a brighter note we have started a Use Inventory Survey of Blue Hill Bay. We will be mapping several of the Bay's uses including commercial fishing areas, public access points, beaches and even pollution sources. Public input is being solicited as we incorporate high-tech mapping systems and GPS to accurately site these uses. Please take the opportunity to fill out the enclosed map. This is the only privately funded study of this nature in the State and the data collected will be invaluable in developing a management strategy for the Bay's future.

As in the past, Blue Hill Bay continues to be a target for large scale aquaculture. While the local entrepreneur with a small mussel farm fits well with the present uses of the Bay, two 50+ acre mussel farms are either operational or planned for

Blue Hill Bay. While these are more benign than salmon aquaculture the fact remains that public waters are being privatized, lobstermen are losing areas to fish and the possibility of large corporations taking over the Bay are again threatening.

Recently the State legislature passed an eleventh-hour emergency bill specifically designed to give a foreign owned salmon farm corporation the ability to increase its holdings from 500 to 1,500 acres of Maine's waters.

Our role as the advocate for a healthy future for Blue Hill Bay continues to be an important one. I hope you find this edition of our newsletter to be informative. I know we can count on your support of this magnificent bay.

~ Don Eley, President

P.S.
Please contribute to ensure our continued success.

Our Mission and Directors

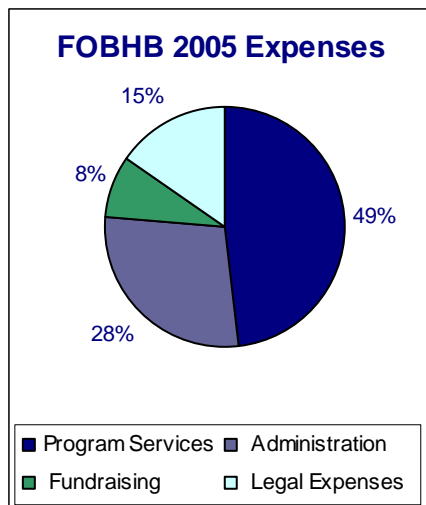
Friends of Blue Hill Bay is a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving the natural ecology, traditional marine fisheries and the unique aesthetic quality of Blue Hill Bay. Friends of Blue Hill Bay is a federal and state tax-exempt 501(c) (3) corporation.

Directors:

Don Eley, President
Dottie Hayes, Vice President
George Knapp, Secretary
John Knutson, Treasurer
Robert Bauer
John Candage
Jennifer Cecil
John Russell Duym
Ronald Lesko
Sal McCloskey
Robert Slaven, Jr.
Robert Vaughan
Teke Wiggin
Patrick Wilmerding

Expense Report

The graph below represents FOBHB 2005 expenses. Legal and research costs were down this year compared to recent reports. With salmon aquaculture gone, we've been able to spend time planning two major projects in 2006: the Use Inventory Project and the Salmon Farm Recovery Monitoring Project. You can read about these initiatives in this newsletter.



Baywide Management

Friends of Blue Hill Bay has been advocating for baywide management for a number of years now. We agree that a strong vision for Blue Hill Bay, created and administered by local stewards, is essential for a healthy ecosystem and for minimizing conflict among stakeholders.

In 2003, the Governor's Task force on Aquaculture recommended, among many things, that the State commence a study of new approaches to management of Maine's bays and nearshore waters. The Legislature agreed with this recommendation and charged the State Planning Office and the Department of Marine Resources, under the direction of the Land and Water Resource Council, to carry out a two-year study of Bay Management.

The study involves two one-year pilot projects in Taunton Bay and Muscongus Bay and numerous public meetings. The project steering committee will wrap up the final phases of the study in the coming months, and the LWRC will make its recom-

mendations to the Joint Standing Committee on Marine Resources in January, 2007.

FOBHB and the East Penobscot Bay Environmental Alliance have attended and presented at several public meetings in support of bay management. We continue to highlight the unique features of Blue Hill Bay as well as the numerous groups and individuals who want to work together to protect and promote it. For instance, Blue Hill Bay features a 4,000-acre conservation easement on Long Island that the town of Blue Hill voted to protect as forever wild.

FOBHB worked with the Taunton Bay group to summarize some of the region's ideas for baywide management and localized networking. Their summary and the Muscongus Bay report were presented to the Steering Committee this summer as all approached the final stages of the project. For more information and to read the final reports of each pilot project go to www.maine.gov/dmr/baystudy/baystudy.htm

Use Inventory Project: Documenting and Mapping the Many Uses of Blue Hill Bay

Friends of Blue Hill Bay staff and volunteers are conducting a Use Inventory of Blue Hill Bay. The goal of the Use Inventory project is to provide objective baseline data about the Bay and the many ways it is used for commercial, recreational, governmental, scientific, and other purposes. We envision that the Use Inventory will be a resource for the many stakeholders who depend on these waters for their livelihoods and enjoyment. It will create a baseline that can be used to identify changing use patterns over time.

A Use Inventory is an important step in better understanding the Bay and how to best preserve its natural ecology, traditional marine fisheries, and unique aesthetic qualities.

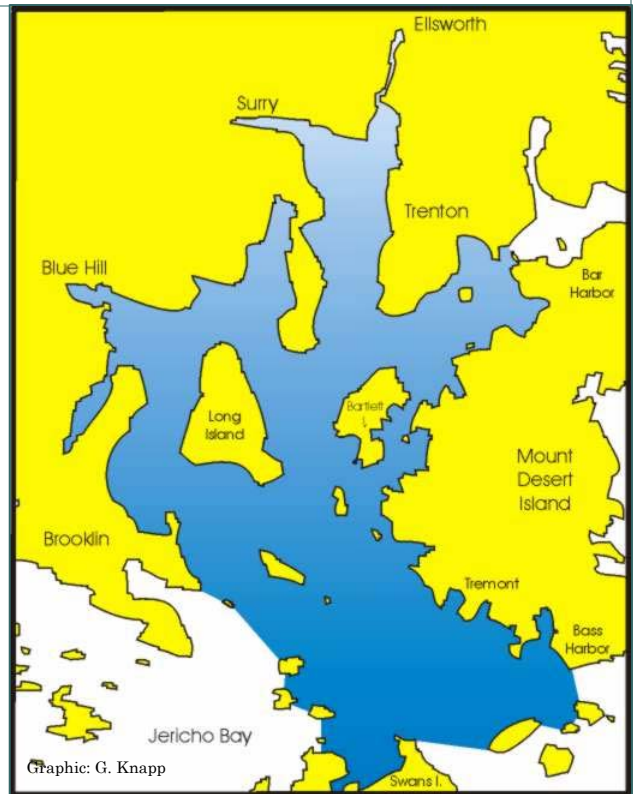
The Use Inventory will collect, compile, and map many different types of information including: public access points, numbers of piers, conserved land abutting the bay, numbers of moorings, scientific research sites, commercial aquaculture and fisheries, marine industry, tourism uses, and much more.

We are gathering data from various sources including municipal records and comprehensive plans, GIS data layers, the Department of Marine Re-

We need volunteers to help us identify & map the uses of Blue Hill Bay.

sources, and from stakeholders themselves.

Defining Blue Hill Bay was the first step in our planning process. This was tricky and finally we decided to follow what the *Coast Pilot* uses for entries to Blue Hill Bay as our outer boundaries. Board member, George Knapp designed this chart (right) where we have identified nine towns as bordering the Bay. They include Brooklin, Blue Hill, Ellsworth, Trenton, Bar Harbor, Tremont, Mt. Desert, and Swan's Island.



FOBHB has hired Heather Albert-Knopp of Brooklin to coordinate the Use Inventory project. Heather is a graduate of College of the Atlantic and she has strong ties to Mt. Desert Island.

FOBHB and Heather Albert-Knopp are working with the Quebec Labrador Foundation's Community GIS experts to map the uses of Blue Hill Bay. Maps showing the various human uses of the Bay will become useful resources for years to come.

Board members Rob Bauer, Rusty Duym, and Bob Slaven, together with John Roberts of Blue Hill, FOBHB administrator, Charley Martin-Berry, and Coordinator, Heather Albert-Knopp are currently recruiting volunteers to help with this exciting project. Things are really getting under way.

Please help us by filling out and returning the enclosed map with uses you value in the Bay. If you're interested in volunteering in more ways, please contact Heather at 359-2157.

~ C. Martin-Berry

Recovery Monitoring cont.

The Maine DEP and the Conservation Council of New Brunswick have expressed interest in this FOBHB-funded project.

MER began sampling this spring. Initial results show that benthic conditions have improved; however, species diversity and abundance are low and remain concerns.

We are anticipating difficulty in acquiring more samples at the site. The

former salmon farm operator holds a current mussel lease in the same vicinity. He has withdrawn his agreement to cooperate with FOBHB and MER in support of scientific research.

Setting up the research project in such a way that all parties involved were in agreement has been tenuous at best. The situation has emerged as another reason why we'd all benefit from a carefully crafted baywide management plan for the Bay.

We hope to be able to return to the site for as many samples as MER deems appropriate to determine recovery.

We have received the full report on the first phase on the project and it's available on our website. Much of the report is raw data, but it's worth taking a look to see a graphic representation of species and objects observed during the video monitoring.

~ C. Martin-Berry

Friends of Blue Hill Bay
P. O. Box 1633
Blue Hill, ME 04614
www.fobhb.org

Non-Profit Org.
US Postage Paid
Permit #19
Blue Hill, ME

*Preserving the natural ecology, traditional
marine fisheries and unique aesthetic quality
of Blue Hill Bay since 1999*

On the Horizon: Food for Thought from Friends of Blue Hill Bay

What's Safe these Days?

Wondering about the latest news on healthy fish, sustainable harvesting, organic fish farming? We like the Monterey Bay Aquarium's online Seafood WATCH for up to date information on what kind of seafood is smart to buy and why. Go to www.mbayaq.org and click on "Seafood WATCH: Choices for Healthy Oceans."

Who's Farming the Bay?

Evan Young of Hancock operates a 2.3-acre mussel farm near Hardwood Island.

Terry Gray of Verona Island operates a 1.94-acre mussel farm off the northeast end of Long Island.

Susan Swanson of Mt. Desert has a lease for a 53.4-acre mussel

farm east of Tinker Island.

Erick Swanson of Mt. Desert occupies a 15-acre mussel lease off Hardwood Island.

Upcoming Hearings:

Spencer Swanson and his mother's company, **Maine Cultured Mussels**, are seeking a 51.4-acre mussel lease off Long Island near Dunham's Cove. Public Hearing will be Oct. 11 at the Blue Hill Town Hall at 6:00 PM.

Terry Gray is seeking to expand his expired experimental mussel lease to ten years and 6 acres. Public Hearing will be Oct. 25 at the Blue Hill Town Hall at 6:00 PM.

To view the applications, go to www.maine.gov/dmr/aquaculture/pending_aquaculture_leases.htm. For more information or to obtain

legal intervenor status, contact the DMR at 207-633-9531. We encourage you to submit comments at the Hearings or to Mary Costigan at the DMR: P.O. Box 8 W. Boothbay Harbor, ME 04575

FOBHB Scholarship:

Graduating seniors with plans for college - watch our website and watch the news for information on the Friends of Blue Hill Bay scholarship. We will be developing application materials and award criteria in months to come.

Thank You

FOBHB Directors and staff would like to thank retiring member, Antoinette "Toni" Smith of Brooklyn and New York for her service and dedication on our Board. Many, many thanks Toni.